



Sunday 1 October, assemble 12 noon,
Castlefield Arena, Rice Street, Manchester M3 4JR

**Protest in Manchester
at the Tory conference**

Tory leak reveals work permit scheme

>>Pages 10&11

**Racist right's new
plan to divide us**



Socialist Worker

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TRADE UNION LEADERS CALL FOR A PAY FIGHT



PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

EDSON DA COSTA

**Campaign ready
to fight for truth
from police**

OVER 100 people met in east London last week to launch the Justice4Edson campaign. Edson Da Costa is one of four black men who died after contact with the police this summer.

Janet Alder and Marcia Rigg also spoke of their fight for justice following their brothers' deaths in police custody.

>>Page 3

BREXIT

**May wins key
vote but test is
not over**

MPS HAVE voted for the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill which will give the government extra legislative powers.

The bill means EU law that affects Britain will be brought into domestic law.

MPs rushed to submit amendments and the Tories may have to compromise

>>Page 7

HURRICANE

**Storm hits the
poorest as rich
rulers don't help**

AT LEAST ten countries have been hit by Hurricane Irma—which has the strongest Atlantic winds ever recorded.

Almost all the buildings in Barbuda have been destroyed.

Even senior MPs say the British government's response has been "found wanting".

>>Page 6

NOW LET'S STRIKE

TURN WORDS INTO ACTION

IT'S TIME for a pay fight.

With the real rate of inflation at nearly 4 percent, a pay "rise" of 1 or 2 percent still means a big cut. Trade union leaders this week unanimously agreed it was the moment to go on the offensive.

They backed calls for coordinated action, and some called for pay rises of 5 percent.

And Unite leader Len McCluskey said he could disregard the "artificial threshold" imposed on strike ballots by anti-union laws.

"If the government has pushed us outside the law, they will have to stand the consequences," he said.

It's time to turn welcome words into hard-hitting strikes. Let's beat the Tories on pay and drive them out.

>>Pages 4&5



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'I don't think I am in the least robotic'

Theresa May reveals her irritation at robot slurs

'We're a couple, we're in love'

Meghan Markle opens her heart about Prince Harry in a magazine interview despite repeated palace demands the media leave them alone

'The most fun I've had this week was at the dentist'

PR boss Piers Pottinger as scandal-hit firm Bell Pottinger faces possible collapse

'We are very fortunate to have a strong cellar'

Convicted fraudster Richard Branson's wine survives Hurricane Irma

'She did the election and she was hopeless'

Tory donor Lord Harris of Peckham on the prime minister

'Let loose the dogs of war. Without them we are in danger when Corbyn's Momentum machine is at work on youth'

Former Thatcher spin doctor Sir Bernard Ingham



Grenfell fire inquiry starts as survivors still suffer trauma

IT IS three months since a fire ripped through Grenfell Tower in west London, killing at least 80 people.

Justice for the dead, the survivors and those displaced by the fire is as distant as it has ever been.

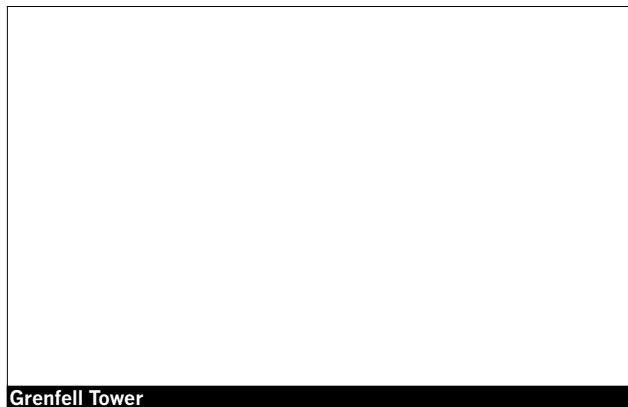
The inquiry into the fire was set to begin on Thursday this week.

The inquiry's chair, Sir Martin Moore-Bick, was to read a prepared statement.

Later in the day a silent memorial march was set to proceed from Notting Hill Methodist church, in the shadow of the tower, at 6.30pm.

The terms of reference of the inquiry have been limited to the direct causes of the fire and will not look at the wider context.

They were fully endorsed by Tory prime minister



Grenfell Tower

Theresa May.

The Defend Council Housing organisation has submitted evidence to the inquiry pointing to the chronic underfunding of council housing as a major contributory factor of the fire.

The inquiry is set to deliver an initial report by Easter

of next year. Meanwhile, survivors are going through hell.

Some have reported not being able to get the image of the burning tower out of their minds.

At least 20 people who survived or witnessed the fire have tried to kill themselves,

according to the Silence of Suicide charity.

And post traumatic stress has begun to set in for many people.

Counselling services provided by the council remain woefully inadequate.

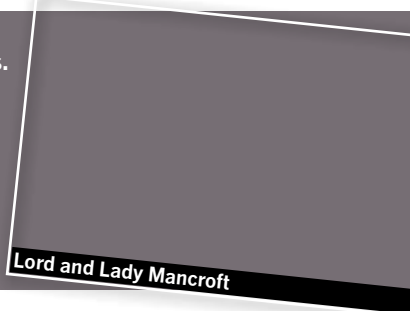
The new council leader Elizabeth Campbell pushed through millions in cuts.

One nurse working with the Justice4Grenfell campaign group described the problems facing survivors.

"There just isn't the proper psychiatric help that people need," she said. "They need trauma and bereavement counselling urgently."

There will be a live stream of the inquiry session at grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk For details of events on the day go to [facebook.com/events/124826314813281](https://www.facebook.com/events/124826314813281) and [facebook.com/events/1200460913391429](https://www.facebook.com/events/1200460913391429)

LORD MANCROFT, a Tory, says there are too many former MPs in the Lords. "Your lordships' house has increasingly become a retirement home for members of another place. They turn up every day and think they ought to speak in every debate even when they have nothing original to say." Mancroft isn't a former MP. The Old Etonian 3rd baron is a Lord because his grandfather was a MP.



Lord and Lady Mancroft

Jacob Rees-Mogg came top in a poll of Tory voters for who they would like as their next leader. Troublemaker wonders what you have to do to come bottom? He opposes gay marriage and abortion. When he's not voting for cuts he talks in Latin and names his children after 13th-century popes.

Academy trust gives up days into new term

AN ACADEMY trust has decided to give up all of its 21 schools.

Wakefield City Academies Trust helpfully chose to make the announcement just a few days into the new school term. It runs schools across Yorkshire.

The trust said it was withdrawing because "the Trust does not have the capacity to facilitate the rapid improvement our academies need".

Just four of the 21 schools were rated good or outstanding by the Ofsted schools

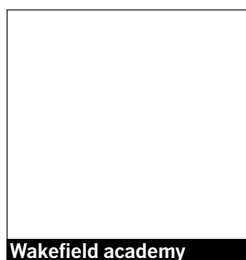
inspectorate.

The Department for Education (DfE) is now helping to look for a new sponsor for the schools.

Apparently simply taking them back under public control isn't being considered as an option.

The DfE used the fiasco to stress how academy trusts "operate under a strict system of oversight and accountability".

No doubt that will reassure the children and teachers now facing an uncertain future.



Wakefield academy

Bigoted bobbies and rifling Rioja rozzers

FOUR cops have been sacked for making offensive comments about gay and disabled people.

They used a closed WhatsApp group to trade phrases such as "big gay bear", mock disabled people and joke about sex crime.

A hearing in Leicester found them guilty of gross misconduct.

Four other cops got written warnings after playing a lesser part.

The cops, who sent 92 offensive

messages over two years, were caught when a phone was seized.

MEANWHILE in the Rioja region of Spain a cop shot and injured 13 colleagues with a rifle he thought was loaded with blanks.

The officer, a member of Spain's paramilitary Civil Guard, opened fire with the assault

weapon for "a joke" during a training exercise.

One bullet severed a colleague's artery.

There were no fatalities.



Tories steal from miners

ENERGY minister Richard Harrington thinks his government's arrangement with mineworkers' pension schemes is working well.

The Treasury is making £51 million a year out of them. When British Coal was privatised in 1994 the government agreed to act as guarantor for the company's two pension schemes with a 50/50 share of any surpluses.

They did much better than expected, and the Treasury has mined this rich seam to the tune of £9 billion.



630,000

the number of 30 hour a week child care places Tories promised

216,000

number of places actually available

£124.23

average childcare costs a week. That is up by a third from £92.99 when the Tories took office in 2010

The minister for Sri Lanka?

IAN Paisley Jr faces a Westminster sleaze watchdog probe over £100,000 worth of holidays.

The leading DUP MP is accused of failing to declare hospitality from the government of Sri Lanka.

Paisley posted a picture last week meeting the country's High Commissioner in London "to discuss NI-Sri Lanka trade deal after Brexit".

It is claimed the son of the late Ian Paisley accepted two family holidays to the Indian Ocean island in 2013.

He denies "defamatory inferences" he did not declare the trips, which don't appear in the register of MPs' interests.

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'I'm angry, I want justice'—Edson campaign launch

by SADIE ROBINSON

OVER 100 people met in east London to launch the Justice4Edson campaign on Thursday of last week. Edson Da Costa died after being stopped by police in June.

Edson's father Ginario was at the meeting along with many relatives and friends. Esa Charles, the father of Rashan Charles who died after being manhandled by a cop in July, was also there.

Edson's cousin Yasmin spoke to the meeting. "Every day I wake up he's the first thing I think of," she said. "I can't express the bond we had. I came to this country with him. And now I have to bury him."

"I'm angry. I'm upset. I want justice. And I won't stop until I get justice."

The campaign plans to lobby London mayor Sadiq Khan to demand that the officers involved in stopping Edson are suspended.

The meeting heard from Carson Arthur from the Stop Watch group and Kevin Blowe from Inquest.

Janet Alder and Marcia Rigg also spoke. Janet's brother Christopher died in police custody in Hull in 1998. Marcia's brother Sean died in Brixton police station in 2008.

Janet spoke to the Da Costa family members in the audience. "The IPCC are there to protect the police and the system," she said.

Fight

"These people are going to lie to you. They can't bring you justice. You've got to fight for it."

Several newspaper reports said Edson died after trying to swallow "packages". The implication was that he was a drug dealer—and that this mitigated the cops' behaviour.

Janet said, "The police are the first people who put out the narrative and



EDSON'S COUSIN Yasmin (above) addressed the meeting (inset)

CONFRONTING THE RISE IN RACISM

Stand Up To Racism conference 2017

Saturday 21 October

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• Catherine West MP
• Kevin Courtney, NUT
• Dave Ward, CWU
• Talha Ahmad, MCB
• Moazzam Begg
• Shahrar Ali, Green Party

Sign up at standuptoracism.org.uk



everybody runs with it. But it's not about what we've done, it's about what they've done. They've murdered your loved one—you don't have to bow down to these people."

Marcia said the way police treat families of those who die in custody "is the biggest insult they can give you".

Evidence

"As soon as your loved one dies in custody they call in the officers' lawyers and the IPCC," she said. "They will get rid of evidence. They will get rid of police notebooks. They will get rid of CCTV."

Marcia described how officers lied about Sean's condition after he arrived at Brixton police station.

"He was brought out of the van

in a collapsed state," she said. "They stood him up and said he stood up by himself. No he did not—the CCTV shows it. As long as a police officer says, 'This is what I believe,' that's all he has to say."

The meeting was honest about the challenges ahead. But it was also a show of strength and a signal that people are prepared to fight.

Janet said, "We've got to fight and stick together. Divide and they rule. Stick together and they're worried."

FIND OUT MORE

Go to [justice4edson](https://twitter.com/justice4edson) on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram for updates, or contact justice4edson@gmail.com

Tasered and bitten by police dog, man died in van

ADRIAN MCDONALD died in the back of a police van after being Tasered and bitten twice by a police dog, a tribunal heard last week.

Three officers—Sergeant Jason Bromley, PC Jonathan Tench and Inspector Richard Bills—face gross misconduct charges over his death.

Adrian was taken away by officers in Chesterton, Staffordshire, in December 2014.

He asked for water and said he couldn't breathe in the van, before suffering a cardiac arrest.

A medical expert said Adrian would still have died if officers had given him medical assistance. The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) said Bromley and Bills "failed in their duty of care".

And "all three officers failed in their duty to Mr McDonald once they were made aware that he was having difficulty breathing". The IPCC said the failures are "sufficiently serious that they are capable of justifying dismissal".

The officers deny the charges and the tribunal continues.

■ A TRIAL of three police officers was set to begin at Birmingham Crown Court on Wednesday.

West Midlands Police officers Paul Adey, Mark Fannon and Paul Greenfield are charged with perverting the course of justice and perjury.

Socialist Worker Appeal to raise £125,000

Socialist Worker is the voice of people fighting for a better world. It dispels the racist scapegoating and the lies about the working class from the mainstream press.

We publish stories of successful strikes, protests and pickets that beat back the bosses and bigots. We are asking everyone who enjoys Socialist Worker in print or online to donate as much as they can and help fund the resistance.

I SUPPORT THE APPEAL BECAUSE...

As a Muslim woman and a GP, I can count on Socialist Worker to cover the issues that matter—from Islamophobia to the cuts in the NHS.

I am acutely aware of the dangerous impact of austerity on my patients. We must

support Socialist Worker to ensure all voices are heard and the struggle for our rights is continued.

Dr Siema Iqbal
GP and member of Muslim Engagement and Development (Mend)

To donate go to www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal

Call 020 7640 5620 or send a cheque, payable to 'SW Appeal' to PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW



£125,000

£100,000

£75,000

£50,000

Total so far
£23,274

IN THIS WEEK

2007

Northern Rock bank seeks bailout

Struggling in the credit markets, Northern Rock applied to the Bank of England for emergency funds on 14 September.

Within five months it had been nationalised. The bank was one of the early casualties of the world financial crisis.



TUC backs a pay fight and debates how to beat the Tories

by TOMÁŠ TENGENLY-EVANS in Brighton

ANGER AGAINST the Tories' public sector pay cap dominated debate at the Trade Union Congress conference in Brighton on Monday.

The issue is urgent. Years of pay freezes or "rises" capped at 1 percent have left workers thousands of pounds a year worse off.

In the first six years of Conservative government, public sector pay rose by 4.4 percent, yet the cost of living soared by 22 percent. That means in real terms pay fell by over 17 percent.

Under pressure, the Tories are lifting the cap—but only for some. This year cops are to get 2 percent and prison officers 1.7 percent, it was announced on Tuesday.

Next year the cap could go for "hard to recruit" jobs such as nursing and teaching. This is too little, too late.

Labour was set to force a House of Commons vote on scrapping the cap for NHS workers, and perhaps others, on Wednesday of this week.

Delegates unanimously passed a motion that slammed the cap—and called for action to scrap it. But the debate also showed up tensions.

Frances O'Grady, TUC general secretary, said, "On 17 October we will rally in Parliament Square to send a message to Theresa May."

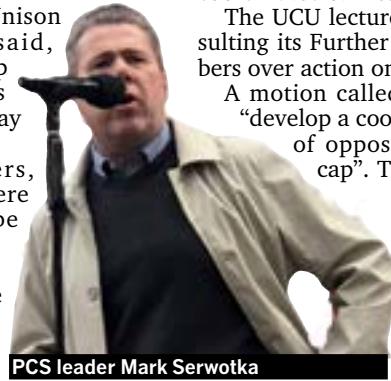
Deserve

"No cherry picking—all public servants deserve a pay rise and they deserve it now."

Dave Prentis, Unison union leader, said, "Scrapping the cap is not enough, this is a fight for real pay increases."

To loud cheers, he added that there would have to be "joint ballots for joint industrial action if all else fails".

But it's unclear how this will be



PCS leader Mark Serwotka

BACK STORY

This year's TUC conference was dominated by public sector pay

● Union leaders demanded that the Tories lift the 1 percent pay cap—and called for real rises

● Some unions, such as the PCS and UCU, are holding consultative ballots for action

● Public sector pay has fallen by 17 percent in real terms since the Tories came to office in 2010

● The Tories may be forced to back down—but only resistance can win a pay rise for all workers

turned into action.

In 2014 the TUC slogan was "Britain needs a pay rise".

After three years of its "political campaign"—warm words and hoping the Tories would listen—workers' pay has fallen further still.

It's right to call for industrial action now. As Mark Serwotka, PCS union general secretary, told the conference, "We have a weak government with no mandate, now is the time not just for resolutions, but for action."

"My union is now balloting every single public sector member. We are aware of anti-union laws, that's why we've got a consultative ballot."

"We're going to analyse the result and flood resources into the areas we need to."

"Wouldn't it be great if we all had consultative ballots in the run up to the budget? If they don't give pay rises for us all, we can give united, coordinated strikes."

The UCU lecturers' union is consulting its Further Education members over action on pay.

A motion called on the TUC to "develop a coordinated strategy of opposition to the pay cap". This could include

"sharing and coordinating campaign activities, tactics, ballots and industrial action". It also called for a national protest.

Several motions from Unison, PCS, FBU and other unions were "composited"—put together as one. Unfortunately a section from the FBU motion was taken out that had called for "immediate steps to commence a campaign for joint and sustained industrial action".

Even among some of the left union leaders there's a worry that the Trade Union Act makes nationwide action impossible.

Unions have to reach a 50 percent threshold of people voting. And 40 percent of all those entitled to vote must vote in favour of industrial action in certain public services including parts of health, education, fire and transport.

The Trade Union Act should not stop unions fighting. The CWU (see page 20) is showing the way to beat the thresholds.



UNISON LEADER Dave Prentis in Brighton, showing how the pay cap means workers lose out

Picture: PA

'Unions mustn't be bullied by new ballot thresholds,' delegates warn

A NATIONAL demonstration over pay backed by unions and the Labour Party could mobilise tens of thousands of people. It could replicate the energy we saw around Jeremy Corbyn's general election campaign in the summer.

But we also need strikes.

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Candy Udwin of the PCS national executive committee said their consultative ballot could help to prepare a good turnout for a real strike ballot.

Speaking in a personal capacity she told Socialist Worker, "We have to treat this as if it were a proper ballot. The government is on the back foot and we can get a strong turnout if we connect to the political mood around Corbyn."

At a Trade Union Coordinating Group fringe meeting Mark Serwotka warned, "We can carry the motion, but we will probably be here again next year. Our union is saying that the time is now."

Unions need to ballot members for action and activists need to organise to put pressure on union leaders. There can be pressure for recall conferences to get pay action now.

Sean Vernell from the UCU lecturers' union told the TUC conference, "By breaking the pay freeze, we can put a real dent in the Tories' austerity programme."

"We need coordinated action—we've done this before, we got 29 unions out together in November 2011."

He took on the idea that the Trade Union Act made national strikes impossible. "We mustn't allow the Tory government to bully us from striking," he said.

"There is a mood, there is an appetite. But if that is not connected to action, there is a danger we'll be back here next year scratching our heads."



Activist Candy Udwin Picture: Guy Smallman

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Events are set up across Britain to boost struggle

MEETINGS, rallies and protests over pay are being organised in many places across Britain.

In the North West of England the regional TUC has called pay meetings on 20 September in Bootle and

Rawtinstall, on 25 September in Nelson, on 27 September in Westhoughton and on 29 September in Manchester.

Rallies were planned in Worcester on Thursday of this week, 14 September, and in Mansfield on 14 October.

Unison Scotland has called a march and rally in Edinburgh on Saturday 7 October.

A range of unions are backing a TUC lobby of parliament and rally in London on 17 October.

And the biggest focus of all is the People's Assembly demonstration at the

Tory party conference in Manchester on Sunday 1 October.

In all of these the message has to go out clearly:

● Strike together to scrap the pay cap now for all public sector workers. No to false distinctions between "deserving" and "undeserving" workers.

● Fully funded increases, no to raiding already overstretched

budgets for pay rises. ● Pay rises above inflation to begin repairing the damage of the last decade—5 percent or more now and similar rises in the future.

● Pay rises should include a big lump sum element that that gives most to the low paid.

● £10 an hour minimum now for all directly employed and outsourced workers.

That course of action is suicidal

CHANTS OF, "Scrap the cap" rang out in Parliament Square last week as hundreds of nurses and supporters rallied against the pay cap.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) called the rally on Wednesday of last week.

Amina, an RCN member from south London, told Socialist Worker, "My wages are the same now as when I started in 2009."

"It's been very difficult and stressful working in the health service with all the cuts we face."

"It's demoralising, we're being asked to do more for less."

At the rally RCN council member Michael Brown

warned the Tories that they could face action.

"If we hear nothing by the time of the budget, I am ready to take the next step and ballot for industrial action," he said.

"That's not a threat, it's a reality."

In a pay consultation in May some 76 percent of RCN members said they would be willing to take industrial action.

At the rally RCN council member Michael Brown



Nurses at the rally Picture: Guy Smallman

Shake the Magic Money Tree

End the Pay Cap, every worker needs a pay rise

New pamphlet from Unite the Resistance by Sean Vernell with a foreword by shadow chancellor, John McDonnell MP

£1.50 from uniteresist@gmail.com or uniteresist.org

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

NUCLEAR DELUSIONS SIDELINE RENEWABLES

THE CASE against renewable energy took a severe blow this week after wind power firms won the rigged race for a government subsidy.

They bid to build offshore wind farms in exchange for a guaranteed price of £57.50 a megawatt hour of electricity that they generate in the next 15 years.

That "strike price" is about half what new wind farm projects went for just two years ago.

It's also far lower than the subsidy thrown at the Hinkley Point C nuclear plant. The government guaranteed it a strike price of £92.50 a megawatt hour plus inflation.

Onshore wind and solar were barred from the subsidy auction.

Their subsidies have been slashed. It's not because they are expensive. In some areas wind and solar power already cost about the same as gas and less than nuclear.

That's despite the Tories throwing money at fossil fuels and nuclear power. They help bosses bulldoze through all obstacles, from Hinkley Point to sites marked for fracking.

That course of action is suicidal

for humanity as we face climate change that threatens our survival.

Severe hurricanes in the Caribbean and southern US are a reminder of this (see page 6). The warming climate is thought to make severe storms more frequent.

This is one aspect of a crisis that could render much of the world almost uninhabitable by 2100.

As well as helping people in the worst-hit regions adapt or make new lives elsewhere, we desperately need to slow the warming. That means an urgent reduction in the amount of fossil fuels we burn.

Nuclear is presented as a "low carbon" alternative to spin away the opposition to a dangerous industry. It's a lie.

Over its lifetime a nuclear plant creates vast carbon emissions. Governments prefer these costly, planet-wrecking technologies because they fit the needs of the capitalist system.

It relies on a model of unplanned growth in the interest of profit.

Bosses reduce the question of energy use to whether there is an opportunity to make profits.

The military is driven by a similar logic. Britain's rulers want to show they can project their power anywhere in the world at will. They love nuclear power as the foundation for nuclear weapons.

But their needs are not our needs. Renewable energy in a democratically planned economy could provide comfort and plenty for all.

So it's shameful that major unions Unite and GMB routinely line up behind the energy bosses.

They say they are protecting their members' jobs. But there are no jobs on a dead planet. And workers win by fighting bosses, not defending bosses' interests.

always seen parliament as the most important battlefield.

Getting elected and governing means proving that Labour is "responsible". So even some of Labour's earliest MPs shunned strikes in favour of "constitutional" parliamentary action.

During the great Miners' Strike of 1984-5 Labour leader Neil Kinnock denounced miners' "violence".

And when Ed Miliband was asked about the public sector strikes against Tory pension attacks

in 2011, he criticised "both sides". Left wing shadow justice secretary Richard Burgon was asked on Tuesday whether he'd support workers if they defied the Tories' draconian anti-union laws. He couldn't give a straight answer.

It's always welcome when MPs such as McDonnell throw their support behind strikes.

But as pressure grows for public sector pay strikes, activists must look to their own strength while using the backing from Labour MPs.

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Michael Bradley on Trump, the Alt-right and fascism in the US

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Brian Richardson and Weyman Bennett on Football Lads Alliance

Sally Campbell on why trans rights don't harm women's rights

Amy Leather on Lenin's key text, The State and Revolution

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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Nato hypocrites are feeding drive to war

JENS STOLTENBERG, secretary general of Nato, was asked last week by the Guardian newspaper “whether he had known a more dangerous time in his 30-year career”. He replied, “It is more unpredictable, and it’s more difficult because we have so many challenges at the same time.”

“We have proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in North Korea, we have terrorists, instability, and we have a more assertive Russia. It is a more dangerous world.”

The 30 year timespan excludes the peaks of the Cold War. For example, in October 1962 the United States and Russia came their closest ever to nuclear war over Cuba.

In October 1983 Russian leaders feared that the US was using the cover of a military exercise to mount a pre-emptive attack on them. They considered making their own first strike. Those were probably the most dangerous moments in the history of humankind.

Stoltenberg’s assessment of the present is a mixture of partial truth and self-interested falsehood. The Korean confrontation is genuinely scary. Until a few years ago the US had a monopoly of nuclear weapons in the Korean peninsula.

The North Korean leadership is quite explicit about the reason for challenging this monopoly. This has apparently taken them to the verge of developing a thermonuclear intercontinental ballistic missile.

Kim Jong-un, the isolated Stalinist state’s ruler, wants to avoid the fate of Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi. Both were removed and killed thanks to US intervention.

Donald Trump has done a lot of sabre-rattling. But the US has no good military options. War with North Korea would at the minimum inflict terrible destruction on Seoul, capital of South Korea.

At the maximum it would lead to the world’s first nuclear exchange. No doubt North Korea would be destroyed in such a war. These horrific scenarios have restrained both sides.

But the interview with Stoltenberg is dominated by the joint military exercise that Russia and Belarus are mounting on their western borders. This is close to Nato member states such as the Baltic republics. He was visiting a British unit in Estonia—part of the Nato deployment of four battle groups in eastern Europe.

Seizure

It’s quite typical of the West’s myopia about Russia that Stoltenberg complains about the Russian exercise, ignoring the fact that it is presumably in part a response to the Nato moves. These in turn followed Russia’s seizure of Crimea in 2014, and its continuing intervention in south-eastern Ukraine.

From a longer term point of view, the conflict is a consequence of the US decision, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, to expand Nato close to Russia’s borders.

For Russian president Vladimir Putin, the Ukrainian decision to make an Association Agreement with the European Union would seriously advance the Western encirclement of Russia.

He has asserted Russian imperialism’s power in its “near abroad”. His behaviour is ugly and autocratic, but no worse than that of the US in the Middle East—and with a much lower body count.

In any case does Stoltenberg’s “more assertive Russia” bring nuclear war with the West any closer? It’s hard to see why it should. The basic calculus that war between the US and Russia would inflict unimaginable catastrophe on both sides restrained the antagonists during those Cold War crises. It continues to apply today.

Moreover, the protagonists in the Korean conflict are constrained by the appalling consequences of them fighting. But then there’s Donald Trump.

James Clapper, ex-US director of national intelligence, told CNN last month, “In a fit of pique he decides to do something about Kim Jong-un, there’s actually very little to stop him. There’s very little in the way of controls over exercising a nuclear option, which is pretty damn scary.”

But, as a loyal servant of the US, Stoltenberg doesn’t mention this. The rest of us must choose between trusting his generals to control Trump or getting rid of a system that gives individuals the power to destroy humankind.

HOMES IN the island of St Martin have been destroyed by Hurricane Irma (main and below)

Storm chaos for the poorest as rich rulers refuse to help

by DAVE SEWELL

HURRICANE IRMA blasted a trail of destruction through the Caribbean last week. At least 28 deaths had been reported by Monday, with ten countries hit.

The worst damage was in small island states and semi-colonies in the eastern Caribbean. They were bracing for Hurricane Jose to follow this week.

Barbuda was left “barely habitable”, its prime minister Gaston Browne said, with 95 percent of its building structures destroyed.

Six out of ten homes were destroyed in St Martin, an island split between French and Dutch rule.

French interior minister Gerard Collomb admitted that government buildings were “the four most solid buildings on the island”.

Rustic

The “more rustic structures” where the poor live “have probably been completely or partially destroyed”.

US-ruled Puerto Rico and a number of British territories—the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos islands—were also hit.

Britain’s islands are a leftover of empire seized in the 17th century and are now used as tax havens and

getaways for the super-rich. Inequality is high and poor black people, including many migrant workers, struggle on low wages.

They have borne the brunt of the storm—and Britain’s government has been shamefully slow to send aid.

Even senior MPs said it had been “found wanting” in a letter to ministers.

Haiti was spared a repeat of the devastation caused by Hurricane Matthew last year, believed to have killed about 1,000 people.

But the damage from

An unnatural disaster

IRMA WAS the most powerful hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic Ocean.

For the first time since 2010 last week saw three hurricanes in the region at the same time—Irma, Jose and Katia.

Scientists believe that climate change is making more powerful storms more common.

A warmer climate means that sea levels are higher and storms are more likely

to bring heavy rain. Both increase the risk of severe flooding. It’s criminal that people in colonies and former colonies of wealthy countries are abandoned to unsafe buildings.

There should be an emergency programme of large scale aid to help poor people prepare for the stormy decades ahead.

And those who decide to migrate to safer zones must be helped—not turned away.

Irma’s winds has piled misery on top of people still struggling to rebuild from Matthew.

Many farmers have lost whole crops two years running.

Food

“This storm didn’t even leave one tree with food on it for us to eat,” farmer Artis Esperance told reporters.

“This has taken food out of the mouths of my children.”

Irma was still rolling over Florida as Socialist Worker went to press.

Tampa was expected to be hardest hit.

Some three million homes and businesses had been left without power, and parts of Miami flooded.

But the sting could be in the tail with storm surges expected to cause widespread flooding as the storm passes.

The state is the third most populous in the US—and much of it lies at or near sea-level.

It’s also home to resorts including president Donald Trump’s personal palace Mar-a-Lago.

But while millions of ordinary people will struggle to rebuild, he and other big landowners get insurance at a discount from the state.

**Got a story?**Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Brexit tests are far from over after May's vote

The Tories are divided, Corbyn is contradicting himself and the trade union leaders are deeply confused

THE TORIES won a key parliamentary vote on Brexit in the early hours of Tuesday with a comfortable majority of 36.

But they face a grinding series of future votes, and the divisions over Brexit haven't disappeared.

This week's vote was to take the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill on to the next stage of parliamentary scrutiny.

Its central purpose is to bring all the European Union (EU) laws that affect Britain into domestic law. The House of Commons can then decide to retain or abolish them.

But one of the most controversial aspects is that the government will gain significant extra powers to make changes without parliamentary approval, using so-called delegated powers.

These are known as "Henry VIII powers" after the Statute of Proclamations 1539 giving the monarch power to legislate by decree.

Although the government denies it, this will shift much of the legislative power of the House of Commons to ministers. It will also undermine the Scottish and Welsh devolved administrations.

Undemocratic

Nearly all Labour MPs voted against the Bill on Tuesday because of this undemocratic aspect.

As soon as the vote was finished MPs, including several Tories, queued to submit amendments. The government may have to compromise or face defeat.

Brexit is also raising crucial issues for Labour and the unions.

One is whether to stay in the EU neoliberal single market, at least for a "transitional period". This week Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has both seemed to lean strongly towards doing so—and then to lean in the opposite direction.

The single market promotes bosses' interests at workers' expense. Its rules have been used to force member states to open up their public services to private competition. They have made it harder

BACK STORY

Leaving the European Union (EU) could mean passing up to eight bills through parliament

- The bill voted on in parliament this week repeals the 1972 European Communities Act
- It also transfers all EU laws that apply to Britain into British law which parliament can rewrite
- This is a mammoth task covering 44 years of legislation
- The bill gives the government so-called "Henry VIII" powers to legislate in place of parliament

to nationalise industries and have blocked strikes.

And they would be used against a Corbyn-led Labour government.

Delegates at the Trade Union Congress (TUC) conference came up with a confused position on Brexit. They passed the TUC leadership's position, which both supports the EU single market and opens the door to attacks on migrants.

"The approach taken in the UK has allowed bad employers to profit whilst letting public services decline," it said.

"The UK should look at other countries' models of free movement and should use all the domestic powers at its disposal to manage the impact of migration."

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said that such alternative models included public sector jobs being "reserved for locals". Though she added, "We're not necessarily advocating them."

Yet delegates also overwhelmingly passed a motion defending freedom of movement.

Sally Hunt, UCU lecturers' union general secretary, said, "We will never stop arguing for free movement of labour."

"It can in many ways border on racist to blame those from other countries for lowering wages. It is employers who depress wages, not immigrants."

TORY BREXIT secretary David Davis last week

Reject the neoliberal single market—and defend freedom of movement

UNIONS HAVE to fight for a Brexit for workers not bosses. That means leaving the bosses' single market. But it also means fighting to defend freedom of movement.

Calls for more immigration controls discriminate against individual workers on the basis of where they were born. And they reinforce the racist and divisive lie that migration is a burden.

There are constant claims that migration drives down wages.

But the unions' biggest focus at the moment is rightly the pay cap. That has nothing to do with migration and everything to do with government policy.

Restricting migration doesn't change that. Workers' unity can.

Fight

The TUC should fight for stronger workers' organisation—not stronger immigration controls.

Former Labour prime minister Tony Blair last weekend called for "restrictions" on free movement in a bid to stop Britain leaving the single market.

A report by Blair's Institute for Global Change called for "new discriminatory terms and conditions". These include further



ANALYSIS

restricting migrants' right to use public services and letting bosses have preference for British citizens.

John McDonnell, Labour's shadow chancellor, rejected the right's calls to remain in the single market indefinitely after Brexit.

"We've accepted that we'll remain in the single market and customs union for a transition period," he told Socialist Worker. "But beyond that it's a new relationship—and it's important that as socialists we determine that."

McDonnell said, "Jeremy and I have always campaigned as strong advocates of freedom of movement. We've got to accept that freedom of movement should not be used to undermine workers' conditions or living standards."

Labour would be "willing to accept reforms of freedom of movement". McDonnell reiterated

Labour's manifesto position of a "fair and managed migration system".

"That overcomes exploitation by employers and agencies that they've used under the existing system," he said.

Exploitation

But immigration controls make migrants more vulnerable—not less—to exploitation. They force migrant workers to jump through hoops or hide from the authorities.

Freedom of movement is in the interest of the whole working class. Stopping the assault on wages requires a fight that unites migrants and British-born workers against the bosses.

Thousands of people were set to rally in Trafalgar Square on Wednesday demanding full rights for EU nationals in Britain and British citizens in the EU.

The events were organised by organisations including the 3million, British in Europe and the Unison union.

On other pages...
EU migrants respond to leaked immigration plans >>> **Pages 10&11**

Protesters oppose the massacres in Myanmar

Vicious attacks on the Rohingya Muslims have seen people take to the streets, says **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

OVER 300,000 Rohingya minority Muslims have been forced to flee their homes in western Myanmar, formerly known as Burma.

Hundreds have died making the perilous journey into neighbouring Bangladesh in recent weeks.

They are running from the Myanmar military regime's latest crackdown. Entire villages have been burned to the ground and widespread killings have been reported.

The senior United Nations (UN) human rights official, Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini, has described the treatment of the Rohingya as a "textbook example" of ethnic cleansing.

In response to the latest atrocities around 200 angry protesters, mainly Muslim, rallied outside Downing Street on Wednesday last week.

On Friday over 200 people joined a protest in Nelson, Lancashire, organised by the local Labour Party.

Another 500 protested outside Downing Street on Saturday. And thousands gathered at protests at Downing Street and at the Myanmar embassy on Sunday.

Forced

Around a quarter of the Rohingya population has now been forced out of Myanmar by fear and terror.

Myanmar's prime minister Aung San Suu Kyi has denied the latest atrocities have even taken place, blaming "terrorists" for spreading an "iceberg of misinformation".

On Wednesday's protest Omar told Socialist Worker, "We want to raise awareness about what's happening. People need to know there's a genocide going on."

As Muslims the Rohingya do not have citizenship rights under racist laws in Myanmar, a Buddhist majority country.

Nadim told Socialist Worker, "If this was Muslims doing it to other Burmese people it would be different—we would all know about it."

"Why is the government not saying anything?"

The military dictatorship that has

BACK STORY

Rohingya Muslims have been forced to flee their homes

● It is part of a crackdown against "insurgents" by the military in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma

● Racism against Rohingya Muslims has been sponsored by the military dictatorship that has ruled Myanmar since 1962

● Former opposition leader and now prime minister Aung San Suu Kyi denied there is any ethnic cleansing

ruled Myanmar since 1962 has persecuted the Rohingya, but it's not just the country's military rulers that are to blame.

Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National Democratic League, became prime minister as part of a sham "reform process" that leaves significant powers in the hands of the military.

When the latest military crackdown began, Aung San Suu Kyi claimed the Rohingya were "Bengalis" and that they had set fire to their own homes.

The system of divide and rule, brought in by the country's former British colonial rulers, shaped the politics of the national liberation movement that took over after independence.

This means that practically all politicians push racism against the Rohingya. Nadim said, "Aung San Suu Kyi is not just complicit in what's going on, but explicit about supporting it."

Other protesters pointed to the British government's role. Dr Maung Zarni said, "The British government is complicit in what's going on. Why are they training the Burmese military?"



On other pages...

Mutiny at the heart of Empire in 1917 >> Pages 14&15



PROTEST IN support of the Rohingya people outside Downing Street last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

FRANCE

Mass strike to defend workers' rights

STRIKERS, STUDENTS and activists were marching through the major cities of France as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday in a day of strikes and protests.

Called by the CGT union federation and other unions, the day of action was called to resist president Emmanuel Macron's attack on workers' rights.

He plans a worse version of former president Francois Hollande's Labour Law

last year. His decrees would make it easier for bosses to impose longer hours, lower pay and layoffs.

Macron added to the anger on Friday of last week when he said, "I will not give an inch to the lazy, the cynical or the extremists."

Strikes were called in over 4,000 workplaces including air traffic control, oil refineries and public services.

Bus and train strikes disrupted public transport and students shut down their colleges.

More than 180 demonstrations took place around France.

There is competition to lead the movement. Left wing MP Jean-Luc Melenchon has called a march for Saturday 23 September. The CGT leadership criticised him, and called a further day of action on 21 September.

But the most important force in the fight are the workers and students who are spoiling for a fight against Macron and the system he represents.

CATALONIA

Million on independence march

SUPPORTERS OF Catalan independence responded to new harassment by the Spanish government with a million-strong march on Monday.

The annual demonstration came in the run-up to a referendum planned on 1 October by the Catalan government, but banned by Spain.

Cops raided a print shop and the offices of a Catalan newspaper on Friday, in an investigation the courts said concerned Catalan politicians. Catalan president Carles

Puigemont accused them of "looking for a fight". He has vowed to declare independence within days if the referendum result is a yes.

Spanish prime minister Mariano Rajoy called the referendum an "intolerable act of disobedience".

Solidarity with Catalonia—should the left support independence? Thursday 21 September, 7pm, London Welsh Centre, 157-163 Grays Inn Rd, London, WC1X 8UE. Public meeting co-hosted by the SWP and the Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (Exterior)

A supporter of Catalan independence

Tory bigot Rees-Mogg is no joke

IT'S BEEN tempting in the past to laugh at posh Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg.

His bizarre behaviour includes calling his child Sixtus Dominic Boniface Christol.

But his recent comments on abortion and LGBT+ marriage show clearly that he's no laughing matter.

His thoughts are out of touch with the views of most people. But they represent the real views of the Tory party.

Rees-Mogg was once a keynote speaker for a far right group that wants "assisted repatriation" of black people and minorities.

His voting record is appalling—he has voted in favour of all benefit cuts.

Some of the latest cuts mean women won't receive child benefit after a second child, unless they can prove that it was the result of rape.

Rees-Mogg's latest comments show he clearly feels that women shouldn't have control of their reproductive choices.

When criticised he hides behind the idea that he is being attacked due to his Catholic faith.

As socialists we have always said that neither church nor state should have any jurisdiction over women's bodies.

What Rees-Mogg embodies is the very real barbaric face of the Tory party.

Rather than just mock him we must redouble our efforts to remove all the Tory bigots from positions of authority.

Marianne Owens
Cardiff



National Action arrests are not enough to beat fascists

THE FAR right poses a serious threat, from the KKK and Nazis in Charlottesville to the racists at the core of the Football Lads Alliance (FLA).

We should greet the arrest of four members of the fascist National Action as good news.

It is unsurprising that those arrested were serving members of the British Army.

The arrests bring the army into the limelight, and rightly so. I don't believe that being in the army necessarily makes people reactionary.

But soldiers have been used at the forefront of repression throughout history.

It makes sense that fascist ideals will be validated in the army's

ranks. This is because of the British Army's role in wars in the Middle East and Islamophobia in wider society.

The calls by some politicians for an inquiry into far right radicalisation feels like a limited response.

Tommy Robinson is free to publish a book on Islam. And the FLA plans to march again in October.

The Tories have been swift in patting themselves on the back over these arrests, but activists know the far right threat is far from over.

Fascists should be denied a platform at every opportunity. We know that it will be anti-racists who drive fascism off the streets,

as we have had to do throughout history.

The lesson of Nazi Germany is that the end goal of fascism is always to destroy democracy.

The growth of violent racist attacks, the murder of Jo Cox and the popularity of the FLA represent a worrying threat from the far right.

If the government wants to fight racism it should turn its attention to the cops. This summer four young black men died after contact with the police.

We have to keep up the fight against the fascists and the racism from the politicians and the press that give them space to grow.

Nadia Sayed
East London

Cuts don't work—make the bankers finally pay

IT'S TEN years on from the credit crunch—and bankers are still having an absolute ball.

The Robin Hood tax campaign estimated that since the crash banks had handed out over £91 billion in bonuses.

But for most people in Britain it's quite a different picture.

The Tories claim the crash was due to Labour spending too much on schools and hospitals. After

all those years of austerity things have only got worse.

The result has been a million people using food banks, a crumbling health service and children crammed into overcrowded classrooms.

A decade later working class people are still expected to clean up after the bankers. Time to finally make them pay for their own crisis.

Bethan Turner
Manchester

US backed South Korea dictatorship

SOCIALIST WORKER is absolutely correct to say that the divided Korea that emerged from the devastating war of the early 1950s has had "dictatorships on both sides".

South Korea was blighted by US-backed right wing military regimes until the 1980s.

More than 600 people died in the great uprising



Protesters in South Korea celebrate the impeachment of Park Geun-hye earlier this year

PICTURE: WORKERS SOLIDARITY

for democracy in 1980.

Earlier this year working class and democratic forces overthrew corrupt US-backed South Korean president Park Geun-hye.

No wonder most South Koreans want the US to butt out of their country's affairs.

Mark Brown
Glasgow

Just a thought...

Why mental health matters

IT IS heartening to see how people are fighting back against the oppressive Tories.

I feel that there is plenty of coverage of the challenges faced by people with disabilities,

But little is said about mental health.

The Scottish government's Mental Health Strategy of 2017 is certainly a step in the right direction.

In the mental health system we have no rights whatsoever.

I think it is time for socialists to address the problem of mental health in a fair and progressive manner.

Andrew Gow
Glasgow

Stop Brexit to end austerity

WE NEED to stop Brexit in its tracks before it's too late.

Austerity is being used by the Tories to rip off as much money as possible from the poor and only socialism can stop this happening.

All migrants are welcome here.

Adam Clark
On Facebook

Hypocrisy on North Korea?

THE International Socialists, forerunner to the Socialist Workers Party, gave critical support for the North Vietnamese liberation forces headed by Ho Chi Minh.

This was to support a national liberation movement against imperialism. North Korea's first leader Kim Il-Sung also waged an anti-colonial struggle.

Like Vietnam, Korea was divided in two by the USA and Russia in 1945. So why is Korea any different?

While I don't support the so-called Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is there not a contradiction here?

Zara Lee
Norfolk

McOccuppy for strikers' jobs

ALL organised workers and left wingers should be prepared to occupy McDonalds outlets if they threaten reprisals against striking workers.

Richard Donnelly
On Facebook

THE RACIST RIGHT’S NEW PLAN TO DIVIDE US

Government documents leaked last week revealed the scale of the Tories’ planned clampdown on European Union migrants living in Britain. Migrants spoke to **Dave Sewell** about what the changes would mean—and how to take on the Tories’ racist scapegoating

THE **TORIES** are planning a vicious attack on the rights of millions of European Union (EU) migrants living in Britain. A Home Office document leaked last week gave the clearest account of the immigration clampdown they’re cooking up.

EU migrants could be fingerprinted at the border, and forced to carry a residency permit. This will be valid for just two years—five for migrants deemed highly skilled—denying any sense of a secure future.

Other proposals deny the right to a family life, and give bosses the powers of border guards over their employees.

Sunderland maths teacher Valerija Peles came from Croatia before it joined the EU in 2013.

She has already experienced the nasty immigration rules Britain imposes on non-EU migrants and could soon extend to EU migrants too.

“The rules are so harsh—and so complicated, especially for people who don’t speak English,” she told Socialist Worker. “If I went abroad with the school it was embarrassing—the children would go through one queue, I’d go through another to give my fingerprints.”

Now the proposals could bring that nightmare to millions more.

Claudia Robinson is a care worker in Derbyshire, supporting people with learning difficulties. “I came here from



Claudia from Germany



Valerija from Croatia



Victor from Romania

Germany six years ago to get married,” she said. “Under the new rules I wouldn’t have had that possibility.”

EU nationals would need to earn at least £18,600 a year to be allowed to bring their partner to Britain. Other relatives will be banned, except for dependants including children aged under 18.

The Home Office paper suggests several ways EU migrants could be sent to the back of the queue for jobs.

One is the use of a work visa—something Valerija has already experienced. Valerija said, “My right to stay was tied to the job, I couldn’t change jobs. And I knew that if for any reason I lost the job, there was a stamp in my passport saying I couldn’t claim benefits.”

Such measures make migrant workers more dependent on their bosses—and more vulnerable.

TUC union federation general secretary Frances O’Grady warned that the Tories’ proposals “would create an underground economy, encouraging bad bosses to exploit migrants”.

Rafel Sanchis Palop, a London hotel worker and Unite union rep, told Socialist Worker that harsher immigration controls make it harder to organise.

“In general, the people who join the union are people who have their papers,” he said. “People who are undocumented are less likely to join the union—often, I think, because they are scared.”

The loudest voices in the media

denouncing the Tories’ proposals were bosses complaining about possible labour shortages.

Agriculture, manufacturing, construction and hospitality all depend on large numbers of EU migrants—particularly in the lower grades. So do health and education.

EU nationals make up 7 percent of the workforce in Britain, according to official figures. They include 11 percent of manufacturing workers and 30 percent of food processing workers.

Hotel bosses say about 75 percent of waiters, 25 percent of chefs and 37 percent of housekeepers are from EU countries. But these bosses are no allies of anti-racists.

“These companies are based on cheap labour,” Rafel explained. “People don’t know their rights and don’t speak English, and companies take advantage of that.”

And bosses’ griping—echoed

by liberals and some of the Labour right—doesn’t help. It lends credence to the idea that immigration is bad for workers who are already here.

But it’s simply a lie to blame immigration for unemployment or low pay (see box).

Trying to defend the interests of some workers by attacking others is always a disaster.

Union activists like Rafel try to organise low-paid migrants to improve conditions. One recent success has been the Fair Tips campaign, forcing high profile restaurants and hotels to stop pilfering tips.

Gains like this help all workers. Rafel said, “There is much to do. But we all know workers are stronger when they are united.

“The government is using its proposals partly to put pressure on the EU, but at the same time it wants to divide us.”

Many in Labour are rightly wary of being seen to oppose Brexit. But the issues are separate.

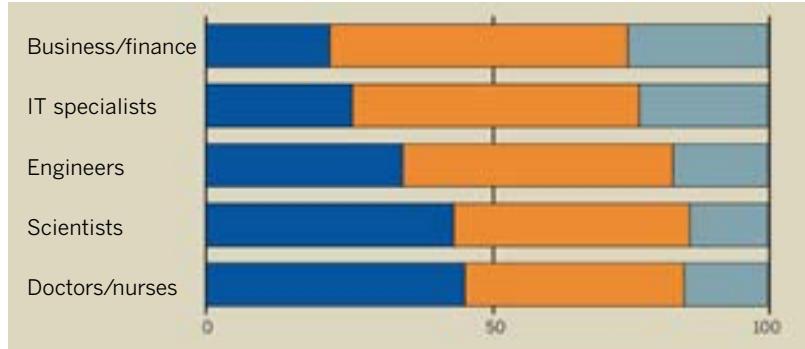
Victor Cosmin from Romania works as a merchandiser in London—taking phone companies’ wares to shops and putting up their posters.

He told Socialist Worker, “Personally, I am a socialist and I support Brexit. To get even social democratic change you need to be free from the influence of the European Commission.

“But there is a lot of fear among immigrants right now—and with the Tories there is a lot to be afraid of.”

Some unions have come out in defence of free movement for EU migrants. The rest need to get off the fence.

Rather than buy into the Tories’ divide and rule the workers’ movement must say clearly—“an injury to one is an injury to all.”



View of immigration
Attitudes to immigration levels vary when different jobs are mentioned. Many people recognise the contribution migrants make in some sectors—but the Tories demonise the “unskilled”.

Percentage of people say

- Increase
- Stay the same
- Decrease

BACK STORY

Permits to profits

AN 82-PAGE draft Home Office paper with proposals for the immigration system after Britain leaves the EU was published by the Guardian newspaper last week.

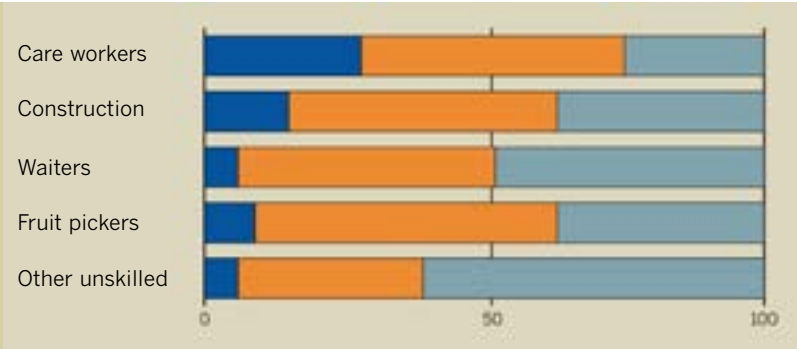
Workers would need to prove their income is above a threshold to get a biometric “residence permit”.

This would only be valid for a few years.

The paper considered different ways of making it harder for EU migrants to get jobs.

Companies could be made to fill out special forms before hiring them.

The number of “unskilled” EU



Myth of ‘unskilled’ driving down wages

RIGHT WING Labour MP Frank Field claimed limiting EU immigration “would have given employment opportunities to huge swathes of younger unemployed or casual workers.”

That’s news to Claudia. “I work 50 to 60 hours a week because they can’t find the staff to cover all the shifts,” she said. Without migrants, “There would be too much work, and a ‘British worker’ wouldn’t necessarily come along to do it.”

The Tories try to appease bosses and racists by distinguishing between skilled and unskilled migrants.

Valerija was only allowed into Britain to meet a national shortage of maths teachers. She said, “I don’t like the fact that Britain wants to take all these super-skilled workers it needs while keeping others out.”

The distinction between skilled and unskilled workers isn’t always clear cut. It’s easy for someone on a high wage to assume that someone paid less is less capable. It can be a lot harder to do their job.

Claudia said, “I came into this country unskilled, but I’ve gained skills since arriving. I’d never worked in care before—I was a train guard in Germany. Now I’ve done my NVQ-2 qualification and am working on my NVQ-3. But I’m still on a very low wage—just £7.20 an hour.”

What about those workers who are unskilled?

Victor said, “I do an unskilled job. But what the Tories forget is that unskilled workers who come here pay taxes. We gave them the money they gave the Democratic Unionist Party.”

Many migrants in low paid jobs resent the idea that they are taking them from other workers. Victor said, “It’s not that employers have a bias in favour of immigrants. Quite the opposite.

“There are many employers who discriminate, and are more likely to give a British person the job if they apply.”

Claudia agreed, “I do have a lot of British colleagues. But the reality is that they are always short of care staff.”

So restrictions on migrants would not open up jobs for anyone else.

The argument then goes that without migrants ready to work on the cheap, bosses would pay more. This is a naive view of a class of ruthless exploiters.

Bosses will pay as little as they can get away with—and that is not the fault of migrant workers.

In the 1950s and 1960s bosses and the government actively recruited migrant workers to work in Britain—and wages rose.

Impact

Former Lib Dem minister Vince Cable revealed this week that Theresa May suppressed nine reports on immigration when she was home secretary.

That’s because the reports found that immigration had little impact on wages and jobs.

A number of recent inspirational strikes that are important for all workers—McDonald’s, Serco health in London, Soas cleaners—involved workforces where migrants are a majority or a large minority.

EU migrants earn on average £3 an hour less than British born workers. But this mostly reflects the fact that they tend to be in low paid jobs, not that they get less for doing the same job.

In some cases they can be desperate enough to take pay and conditions that “only immigrants would put up with,” as Victor put it. Immigration controls would make this worse, not better.

The goal of migrant-bashing politicians isn’t to fill any gap their policies create by making bosses pay more—but by getting British-born workers to accept less.

The Tories set the “National Living Wage” too low to live on. They cap the pay of five million public sector workers, with huge knock-on effects.

Their welfare reforms are designed to create enough stigma and fear around unemployment to terrorise people into taking whatever is on offer.

The only antidote is workers’ resistance—something immigration controls divide and weaken.

“**Britain only wants super-skilled workers, keeping others out**”

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

LIVERPOOL

As Corbyn takes on the establishment— is socialism possible?

Wed 4 Oct, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
22 School Ln,
L1 3BT

SWANSEA

As Corbyn takes on the establishment— is socialism possible?

Thu 5 Oct, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA20BP

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BARNSELEY

Economics and the crisis

Thu 21 Sep, 7pm,
YMCA, Blucher St, S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Fake news and alternative facts—media in the 21st century

Wed 20 Sep, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

BOLTON

Podemos, Catalonia and the Spanish state

Thu 21 Sep, 7pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

BRADFORD

After Charlottesville— Trump, the far right and fascism

Thu 21 Sep, 7pm,
Glyde House,
Little Horton Lane (opposite the ice rink), BD5 0BQ

BRIGHTON

Why is racism on the rise and how do we fight it?

Thu 21 Sep, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St, BN1 1AF

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Palestine—is the boycott hurting Israel?

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St James's St, BB11 1NR

CHELMSFORD

What is going on in Venezuela?

Thu 21 Sep, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

CHESTERFIELD

Abortion Wars—the fight for reproductive rights (book launch)

Thu 21 Sep, 7.30pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

SOCIALIST WORKER PUBLIC MEETINGS



North Korea, Trump and nuclear confrontation

BRISTOL

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
YHA,
14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

COVENTRY

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St,
CV1 3BB

DUDLEY

70 years since the Partition of India—what is the legacy for today?

Wed 20 Sep, 8pm,
The What Centre, 23 Coventry St, Stourbridge, DY8 1EP

DUNDEE

How can the left shape Brexit?

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd, DD1 1LL

EDINBURGH

In a world of war, austerity and racism—how relevant is Karl Marx today?

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St,
EH1 2JL

DONCASTER

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
The Womens Centre (Changing Lives),
5 Princes St, DN1 3NJ

LONDON: CENTRAL

Thu 21 Sep, 6.30pm,
Room 130, UCL, Foster Court Building,
WC1E 6BT

ESSEX

Can the police be reformed?

Thu 5 Oct, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd, Chelmsford
CM1 2QL

GLASGOW

The bloody history of the British Empire

Thu 21 Sep, 7pm,
Avant Garde, 33-44 King St,
Merchant City,
G1 5QT

HUDDERSFIELD

How can women's liberation be achieved?

Wed 20 Sep, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade (near both train and bus stations),
HD1 5JP

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St),
E17 4QU

HULL

After Grenfell—the fight for decent housing

Thu 21 Sep, 7pm, Cafe licious,
104 Cottingham Rd, HU6 7RZ

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

70 years since the partition of India—what is the legacy for today?

Thu 21 Sep, 7pm,
The Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

From the match women to McDonald's—organising the unorganisable

Thu 21 Sep, 7.30pm,
The Peppercot Centre,
1a Thorpe Close, Ladbroke Grove, W10 5XL

LONDON: BRIXTON

Salvador Allende and the Chilean revolution
Wed 20 Sep, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd, facing Windrush Square),
SW2 1EP

LONDON: EALING

From Houston to Bangladesh—are we too late to stop catastrophic climate change?

Thu 21 Sep, 7.30pm,
Y Lounge,
YMCA West London,
25 St Mary's Rd,
W5 2RE

LONDON: HARINGEY

Will Trump launch a nuclear war?

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd (corner Vincent Rd),
N15 3QH

LONDON: ISLINGTON

After Grenfell—the fight for decent housing

Thu 21 Sep, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St,
N7 6QT

LONDON: NEWHAM

The roots of racism

Wed 20 Sep, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next to Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

From Deliveroo to McStrike—why socialists support strikes

Wed 20 Sep, 7pm,
Oxford House,
Derbyshire St (opposite Bethnal Green Rd Tesco),
E2 6HG

MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

Trump, the far right and fascism

Wed 20 Sep, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

NEWCASTLE

Podemos, Catalonia and the Spanish state

Thu 21 Sep, 7pm,
Broadacre House,
Market St,
NE1 6HQ

NORWICH

Rock Against Racism—how music helped fight fascism

Thu 21 Sep, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

OXFORD

Steve Biko and the struggle against apartheid

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
Michael Young Building,
Manzil Way,
Cowley Rd,
OX4 1YH

POOLE AND DORCHESTER

Syriza—just a Greek tragedy?

Thu 21 Sep, 7.30pm,
Goldies Public House,
36 High E St,
DT1 1HN

PORTSMOUTH

What drives terrorism today?

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
Somerstown Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

SCARBOROUGH

After Grenfell—the fight for decent housing

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
Scarborough Central Library,
The Reading Room,
Vernon Rd,
YO11 2NN

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

From Stalin to Putin—Russia today

Thu 21 Sep, 7pm,
Central United Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible Theatre),
S1 2JB

SOUTHAMPTON

Can the police be reformed?

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
Central Baptist Church Hall,
Devonshire Rd,
SO15 2GY

SWANSEA

Brexit—trouble for the Tories and a trap for Labour?

Thu 21 Sep, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd, SA20BP

TELFORD

After Grenfell—the fight for decent housing

Thu 21 Sep, 7.30pm,
Carriages, The Parade,
Wellington,
TF1 1PY

YORK

The IWW—when US workers fought back

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St,
YO10 4AH

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

LONDON

Deaths in custody, rising Islamophobia—where next for the fight against racism?

Wed 20 Sep, 7.30pm,
Ramadan Mosque,
15 Shackellewell Ln,
E8 2DA.

Organised by Stand Up To Racism. Speakers: Moazzam Begg, Ginario Da Costa, Esa Charles, Weyman Bennett

Solidarity with Catalonia—should the left support independence?

Thu 21 Sep, 7pm,
London Welsh Centre,
157-163 Grays Inn Rd,
WC1X 8UE.

Public meeting co-hosted by the Socialist Workers Party and the Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (Exterior)

ROTHERHAM

Deaths in custody, rising Islamophobia—where next for the fight against racism?

Wed 27 Sep, 7pm,
Unity Centre, St Leonard's Rd,
S65 1PD.

Organised by Stand Up To Racism. Speakers: Moazzam Begg, Taiba Yaseen, Abrar Javid, Weyman Bennett

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Imagine a police state that can read your every thought

Channel 4 series *Electric Dreams* promises to go deeper than most adaptations into the nightmarish world of cult writer Philip K Dick, writes **Ken Olende**

CHANNEL 4's *Electric Dreams* is a new science fiction series based on the short stories of the wildly imaginative writer Philip K Dick. Each is a self-contained and unconnected story.

It's got some accomplished writers and directors including *The Night Manager's* David Farr and *Stranger Things's* Jessica Mecklenburg. And some big-name stars such as Anna Paquin, Bryan Cranston and Timothy Spall.

The first episode, *The Hood Maker*, is excellent. It looks like a current or even old fashioned Britain.

Honor (Holliday Grainger) is a Teep forced to work with the authorities as they crack down on dissent.

The Teeps are an oppressed group with telepathic powers who the police use to keep a check on dissent.

But someone has developed a hood that blocks mindreading, and is distributing it to the rebellious poor.

In the more comic *Impossible Planet* two seedy guys run Astral Dreams, a tourist agency.

Stunning

Its spaceship offers stunning views of the galaxy's most amazing sites, which are actually digitally created on screens.

An old woman (Geraldine Chaplin) asks to be taken to the forgotten planet Earth.

The two guys imagine that fooling her into believing that they've found Earth should be easy.

So far the plots for *Electric Dreams* are taken from Dick's work in the early 1950s when he was developing his talent.

The first two episodes have been extensively reworked from the



RICHARD MADDEN and Holliday Grainger in opening episode *The Hood Maker*

PICTURE: CHRIS RAPHAEL

original material—in the case of *Impossible Planet* the twist ending is changed.

The programme makers have had to update old futures. Both episodes increase the diversity in the stories by having more active roles for women and more non-white characters.

Dick became a cult writer in the 1960s. His stories began showing less interest in scientific advances and more in their psychological and political implications.

By the time of his best novels,

such as *Ubik*, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* or *Valis*, he was presenting paranoid visions of future capitalist systems.

In *Ubik*, argumentative doors charged residents to leave their own homes.

His fictions focused on what is real—and how it may be impossible to tell if it is.

He became famous after his death as Hollywood made films from his books. The recent TV series of his novel, *The Man in the High Castle*,

shows a renewed interest in his work. His loathing of authority and siding with the little person fit with a current mood.

Few adaptations have equalled the philosophical complexity of Dick's books.

From a promising start, hopefully the *Electric Dreams* series will continue and take on some of the author's mature work.

Electric Dreams

Channel 4
Starting 17 September

Wry hitman fantasy shows wheelchair users' reality

FILM

KILLS ON WHEELS

Directed by Attila Till
In cinemas now

IT'S NO secret that disabled film roles tend to be played by able-bodied actors.

So watching director Attila Till's *Kills on Wheels*, as a disabled performer and a wheelchair user myself, was a much needed breath of fresh air.

It's a well-crafted film full of charisma and sensitivity, and with its

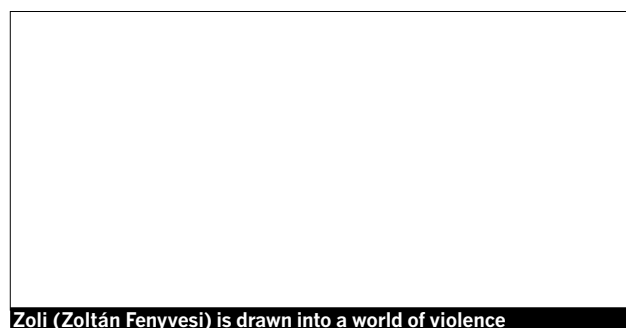
disabled cast approaches a difficult and unique perspective.

The beauty of this film is the characters.

Zoli and Barba, two inseparable friends living in a rehabilitation facility for physically disabled people, struggle against a bleak prognosis.

Zoli, in need of life-saving surgery, resents the idea of his absent father funding it out of a sense of guilt and pity.

They both meet Rupasov, a darkly charismatic wheelchair user, and are drawn into



Zoli (Zoltán Fenyvesi) is drawn into a world of violence

world of hitmen, violence and carnage in the hopes of raising money.

The film is well cast and even more talentedly performed. The humour,

though subtle, is a mirror of life in a wheelchair—and this film never flinches away from that reality.

Lead actors Zoltán

Fenyvesi, Szabolcs Thuróczy and Ádám Fekete draw the viewer into their world. The film dances artfully between fantasy and a grim reality.

The chemistry between Zoli and Rupasov as they navigate a dangerous world is exquisite.

Kills on Wheels is a direct message to directors.

Disabled people don't often get a chance to shine on the screen.

But when we do, we shine as brilliantly as those who are able bodied. **Brii Pike**

FILM

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

Shut Out The Light
For details of local community screenings near you, go to dennisskinnerfilm.co.uk
To organise one, email info@shutoutthelight.co.uk

Labour left's stalwart has stories to tell

THIS documentary chronicles the life of veteran Labour MP Dennis Skinner, the "Beast of Bolsover". Skinner has been an MP for 47 years. So in some ways this is an account of British politics for the past five decades.

We hear about his early introduction to class politics, when his dad was sacked as a miner after the 1926 General Strike.

Poverty affected his childhood. Skinner explains, "We knew Santa wasn't visiting our house."

He talks about the mushroom picking and apple scrumping of his childhood. Skinner is a warm, thoughtful anchor for the film.

The Nature of the Beast is at its strongest when

Skinner, the "Beast of Bolsover"

it follows his impressive political life, such as his involvement in the 1973 Clay Cross rent strike.

Archive footage of Skinner speaking in parliament and on protests is interspersed with contemporary interviews with him and his brothers.

He talks proudly about his role in stopping racist Tory MP Enoch Powell banning stem cell research. But it would have been more interesting to hear about the wider opposition to Powell.

The Nature of the Beast is a comprehensive portrait of Skinner. But the film is too long and at times it fails to engage, as Skinner just delivers lengthy monologues.

Reflecting on his political life, Skinner says, "Nature, like politics is not static."

"There will always be more fields to conquer as well as there will always be more blossom on another day."

Sarah Bates

MANY historians paint the British Army in the First World War as characterised by bravery and duty as soldiers went loyally over the top to their slaughter.

Tory historian Niall Ferguson, for example, claims, “Mutinies were few and far between.”

In fact revolts occurred in British ranks from the beginning of the war. Troops refused to fall in for parade in the autumn of 1914 in protest at poor accommodation.

An unseen class struggle was conducted at the front as soldiers simply refused to kill in an ongoing “live and let live” policy.

The Christmas truce was a mutiny on a mass scale that in some areas lasted for weeks.

In 1917 every front saw huge unrest come to a head. The February Revolution in Russia inspired 50,000 Russian troops to march away from the war to defend the uprising.

Early in 1917 50,000 Italian troops mutinied and in March South African conscripted labourers struck at the port of Dieppe in Belgium.

The same month saw half the French army refuse to fight after yet another pointless assault: a revolt accompanied by embryonic soldiers’ councils.

The British army became a tinder box.

In the 19th century most recruits had been garnered from the countryside, but this source was not enough to meet the demands of world war.

After 1914 five million industrial workers joined up.

They brought with them the class antagonism they had been schooled in by the four years of the “Great Unrest” immediately beforehand.

In summer 1917 the British and their allies established a metropolis of war extending from the coast of Belgium to the headwaters of the River Somme. Some two million men, women, soldiers and labourers were gathered in a vast array of tents, huts, hospitals and prisons.

Brutality

It was an army drawn from the four corners of the British empire—and a microcosm of its brutality.

In training grounds known as “bullrings” new recruits received as little as nine days’ instruction before being thrust to the front.

Etaples in north east France was the core of this metropolis. The troops were subjected to a fierce regime by officers of the blood and bayonet school.

War poet Wilfred Owen described it as a “kind of pad-dock where beasts are kept a few days before the shambles.”

Soldiers old, new and injured were marched and double



Etaples in north east France—the core of Britain’s metropolis of war

MUTINY AT THE HEART OF EMPIRE

Ripples of revolution spread across Europe and beyond in the wake of the February revolt in Russia in 1917—and, Chris Fuller explains, the British Army was no exception



Percy Toplis, mutineer

marched across the dunes.

Their main meal was two slices of tinned beef, two biscuits and an onion. Denied the pleasures of Etaples town—known as “eat apples”—one soldier described the experience as “like passing through hell”.

Military police who had rarely been to the front meted out discipline and “there was always someone tied to a gun wheel”.

On 5 September 1,300 Egyptian labourers went on

“

Discipline ceased to exist, a mob of 10,000 broke out and marched

strike and broke out of their compound at the port of Boulogne.

They had been subjected to mass bombardments and were angry at threats to their rights to home leave.

Field Marshal Haig sent in troops with orders to shoot and 23 workers were killed.

Five days later more Egyptian workers struck at Calais with four of their number being mowed down in retribution.

Contagion was in the air and

it was this that gave the events at Etaples their significance.

On 9 September a New Zealander in Etaples base camp was arrested for overstaying his leave.

Tempers flared and 2,000 recruits surrounded the police hut where they thought their comrade was being held.

More troops then gathered to cross a bridge to Etaples town, a confrontation ensued, a policeman fired his gun and a corporal Wood was killed.

These events sparked five more days of collective refusal to obey orders. General Thompson, the camp’s commander, kept a diary of the events which understate, for his own sake, the extent of the mutiny.

He recalls events on the first day.

“The attitude of the crowd was very threatening, stones were thrown, and attempts were made to rush the police hut,” he wrote.

Thompson goes on to describe groups of mutineers as large as 4,000-strong.

On one occasion “the demeanour of the crowd was so threatening towards the police, that the police disappeared”.

Significantly he recalls that “bodies of men broke through the picquets (police lines) into the town and held noisy ‘meetings’”.

THE reference to “meetings” is tantalising with echoes of union organisation that workers would have experienced at home. There are reliable accounts of a deep political mood.

Private Edwards recalled mutineers shouting, “Down with the Red Caps” (the military police) and, “Let’s release the prisoners” in a show of solidarity with the oppressed.

Furthermore the numbers involved were probably much larger than Thompson states.

General Asser went to Etaples to quell the revolt. He recalled, “Discipline ceased to exist. Reinforcements would not get into their teams and a great mob of about 10,000 broke out then and in subsequent evenings and marched into Paris Plage.

“The place seemed as if there was a big strike on, crowds loafing about and so on.”

This suggests that, beyond the 10,000 who broke out of camp, many more of its 100,000 residents were engaged in strikes.

The sheer numbers involved gave the mutineers confidence. Major OC Guinness recalled how a crowd “raided the office of the base commander, pulled him out of his chair and carried him on their shoulders through the town”.

On 14 September, the last day of the mutiny, Haig recalled in his diary that at lunch he drank, “several glasses of wine,

port and old brandy.” He also planned revenge.

Fifty four men were court-martialled, three were jailed for mutiny and one, Corporal Jesse Short, was executed by firing squad.

However, the revolt had rattled the British ruling class. General Thompson lost his job, the notorious “bull ring” at Etaples was closed and training shifted to the front line.

Significantly in October soldiers in Flanders received a pay rise to £2.50 a week, albeit at a time when war ministers in the cabinet were on £100 per week and dinner for two in the Ritz cost £3.

Threaten

The working class Tommies continued to threaten and strike fear into their rulers.

In the same week of the Etaples mutiny the cabinet received reports of dissent at camps in Shoreham, Sussex.

General Asser would never forget that the new British Army consisted of what he described as “the scum of the earth from the slums of Glasgow”.

The events at Etaples 1917 came to popular consciousness with the televised drama “The Monocled Mutineer”, aired in 1986 to an audience of ten million.

The four-part series, written by Alan Bleasdale and starring Paul McGann, was viciously attacked by the right wing press and accusations of made up history were rife.

Bleasdale’s “Monocled Mutineer” is in fact a masterpiece. It portrayed historical events using a fictionalised account of the life of a real person, Percy Toplis, who is shown as one of the mutiny’s leaders.

The BBC’s Managing Director of Television defended the drama saying that it told “The greater truth about World War One”.

Episode one shows Tommies being engulfed by British mustard gas when the wind blew the wrong way.

Advancing troops are snared on German barbed wire that artillery pounding could not destroy

All these things happened in reality.

The drama gives a graphic, disturbing and far from purely fictional, account of a shell shocked officer being executed by firing squad.

This was all part of the

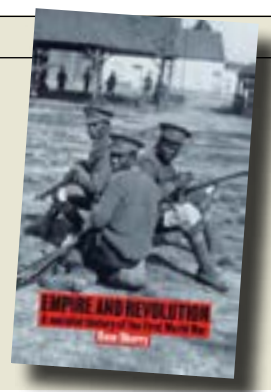
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Field Marshal Douglas Haig



Workers in revolt needed media of their own

Workers’ councils and political parties set up newspapers to counter the lies of the rich—and to organise the struggle against them



SOLDIERS GET their first copies of Izvestia in April 1917

1917 TIMELINE

1 September (14 September in the modern calendar)

- After failed coup exposes the government, support grows for idea of soviet rule
- Some 126 local soviets call on the Petrograd Soviet to take power
- Petrograd Soviet resolves to support Bolshevik party

published two newspapers during 1917—Novaya Zhizn (New Life) and Rabochaya Dyelo (Workers’ Cause).

The Bolsheviks produced Pravda, meaning truth.

Unlike the capitalist press, Pravda spoke of the lives and struggles of ordinary workers.

Bolshevik Grigory Zinoviev claimed Pravda gave half the space in its pages to letters and reports from workers.

“These letters spoke of the everyday life in the factory or workshop, barracks or factory district. In simple language, the details were given of the privations and oppression to which the workers are subjected,” he

“

The party that forms round this newspaper will be ready for everything

said. “These letters better than anything else in the world expressed the growing and seething protests which afterwards burst out in the great revolution”.

But the paper didn’t just reflect workers’ lives. It also linked them to bigger political questions and pointed them towards revolution.

Organise

Pravda helped workers organise and fight around the Bolsheviks. In 1903, Lenin said a revolutionary paper “may be compared to the scaffolding erected around a building under construction.

“The organisation which forms round this newspaper will be ready for everything.”

After workers overthrew the capitalist government in October, Izvestia became the paper of the soviet state. Pravda became the paper of the Communist Party, as the Bolsheviks renamed themselves.

A growing bureaucracy behind Joseph Stalin waged a counter-revolution in the 1920s. Izvestia and Pravda became propaganda papers for the Stalinist state and Communist Party.

Descendants of Izvestia and Pravda still exist in Russia today, although they’ve got nothing in common with the revolutionary papers of 1917.

But the legacy of a revolutionary press—focused on workers’ struggles—is worth learning from.

This is part of a series of weekly articles on the Russian Revolution tinyurl.com/sw1917

Court justifies councils' race to bottom for disability assistants

by MARK DUNK

THE COURT of Appeal has rejected an appeal against an earlier judgement allowing Oxfordshire County Council to cut Luke Davey's social care package by almost half.

The cuts to his support have left Luke increasingly stuck in his home. The dedicated team of Personal Assistants (PAs) who support him to live independently may break up.

Disgrace

The decision is a disgrace. It allows councils to wash their hands of responsibility for maintaining levels of social support for disabled people.

This echoes a judgement on access to wheelchair spaces on buses earlier this year.

It allowed bus companies to largely avoid responsibility—leaving drivers, disabled passengers and parents travelling



LUKE DAVEY outside the court

with pushchairs to fight it out.

The recent decision supported letting “local market conditions” decide the level of support based on the average wage for a PA in the area.

But “local market

conditions” are determined in large part by how much councils make available for disabled people to employ PAs.

The ruling is a licence for local authorities to reduce the level of disabled people's

payments under the false pretence that the support provided will remain unchanged.

It takes at face value the low wages paid by profiteering PA agencies with no consideration for the level of skill and training required to be a PA.

Responsibility

Councils want to drive down PAs' wages, and they are shifting the responsibility to do that onto disabled people who have had the status of employer thrust upon them.

These disabled people don't have adequate funding or support to exercise any true degree of choice and control.

In order to try and maintain their support hours with less money disabled people are left with little option but to reduce the pay and conditions of their PAs.

This then reduces the local average wage and provides the councils with a ready made excuse to further

reduce payments the next time someone's support is up for review.

The judgement enshrines in law a system based on a race to the bottom.

This will inevitably cause distressing conflict between disabled people and the skilled workforce who support them in living independently.

Trained and experienced PAs could be forced out of the profession, leading to deskilling.

This will be particularly damaging for those with high and complex support needs which require skilled PAs to provide a level of support that does not override the disabled person's autonomy.

There is not an ounce of justice in the decision.

Disabled people and PAs must stand together in a fight to restore the social provision decimated by Tory cuts.

Go to Disabled People Against Cuts dpac.uk.net

BENEFITS

Millions are hit hard by shake-up and freeze

BENEFIT CUTS and “reforms” will leave over two million households in Britain more than £50 a week worse off by 2020.

More than 84 percent of them are households with children.

That's the finding of a report commissioned by the council leaders' Local Government Association, published last week.

Almost two thirds of those losing more than £50—some 1.34 million households—are in work.

For many, switching over to the new Universal Credit (UC) benefit brings “significant loss in income” and “raises the risk of working poverty”.

A freeze on the rates of key working age benefits hits even larger groups, as their payments shrink in the face of inflation and higher rents.

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Report into Rotherham child abuse excuses top officials

A new report says senior officials at Rotherham council knew of problems with child sexual exploitation—but none should be charged over failures. **Sadie Robinson** looks at the claims

NO SENIOR council officials should be held accountable for failing to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham, according to a new report.

Six reports commissioned by Rotherham council were published last week.

They follow Professor Jay's 2014 report that estimated that at least 1,400 children had suffered Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013.

The main report found that in that time, "Most senior officers with responsibility for the safeguarding of children knew that there were issues with CSE."

The council established Risky Business, a group to support vulnerable girls, in 1997 because of CSE concerns.

The report conceded, "A number of opportunities to take early decisive action to tackle the issue were missed."

Systematic

But it said the problem was "systemic" and found "no culpable behaviour which could now justify any form of legal action".

Some 27 council officials refused to be interviewed for the reports. Some of those who were interviewed made unexpected claims.

The report found it "very surprising" that Phil Rogers said he had "no knowledge of CSE in Rotherham". He held overall responsibility for the youth service and Risky Business.

The authors did not have access to all relevant data as some "appeared to be missing".

But they said there is "no reason to believe that any documentation



SENIOR COUNCIL officers knew that children were being abused

has been withheld or deliberately concealed". And they are "confident that the broad thrust of our findings would not have been significantly different even if all of the papers we had asked for had been found".

No disciplinary or capability proceedings are warranted "in respect of any senior manager currently in post at the council".

Home Office researcher Adele Gladman was employed by Rotherham

council to investigate CSE in 2001. She said that in 2002 all data relating to her report was removed from filing cabinets at Risky Business.

She also said a computer had been accessed, some files deleted and fake minutes of meetings created.

A Risky Business worker corroborated her account. The report concluded, "We do not believe such a 'raid' on the premises of Risky Business took place."

Yet a separate report specifically into the allegation disagreed. "It is likely files were removed from the Risky Business Office and computer records impaired," it said.

It added that a partial copy of the report may have been found that "includes the identity of significant persons".

This "could have provided a motivation to remove records relating to Risky Business work," it said.

Abuse in care 'not untypical'

ONE OF the reports investigated fifteen cases of abused children.

Independent consultant Jean Imray found "insufficient grounds to proceed with any action against any individual practitioner or team leader".

But she said that this wasn't the case with Child E.

She said on initial inspection there was "evidence of significant culpability by at least two social care professionals".

Child E came from an abusive family and was placed in a residential unit where she was raped.

She was then moved to another unit where she was raped again by another resident.

"It is hard to understand why the council continued to place children in these units knowing that they would not be safe," Imray said.

Child E was 12 at the time.

She wasn't allocated a social worker for over six months after she had been raped twice.

Child E began "for the first time exhibiting behaviour strongly associated with CSE".

Imray said there was "evidence of negligence".

She added that abuse by adults in residential care was "not untypical".

She continued, "The total absence of evidence of thinking what life was like for some of the children was one of the most striking features of the reviews of these cases."

Sexist attitudes came from the cops and the council

THE REPORTS found evidence that some council employees treated reports of abuse as "exaggerated". One former children's home manager told the report that "you had to take a bit of hysteria alongside" information provided by Risky Business.

There is also evidence of a "dismissive attitude towards the young women" suffering abuse.

Some social workers and cops deemed victims to be making a "lifestyle choice" or being in a "consensual relationship".

Jacqueline Wilson, former Head of Children's Services said she asked South Yorkshire police to carry on surveillance on suspects, but they said it was too expensive.

One former council employee said they were on the 'verge of some major disaster' because of their resources.

Some have argued that Rotherham council feared tackling Asian abusers because of political correctness. A number of interviewees disputed this.

Jacqueline Wilson said Rotherham council's



Reports were treated as 'exaggerated'

members were "the least PC people I'd come across in a long time".

Sonia Sharp, former Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, said, "I would characterise Rotherham as having more of a racist culture than a politically correct culture."

There were sexist attitudes within the council and pornography was discovered "on the laptops of three Members".

The report said, "It is not difficult to see how this may have impacted on the council's response to CSE."

IN BRIEF

Hospital workers will lobby trust

BARTS HEALTH strikers and their supporters were set to join a lobby of Barts Health annual general meeting this week.

The workers, employed by outsourcer Serco at a number of east London hospitals, have been striking for a pay rise and improved conditions.

Protest Wednesday 13 September, 5.30pm, Stratford Old Town Hall, 29 Broadway, London E15 4BQ.

Lecturers to strike in Manchester?

UCU UNION members at the University of Manchester are balloting for strikes over job cuts.

Bosses want to make up to 140 workers redundant by September next year.

The union said the university recorded a £36 million surplus in 2015/16.

It has £1.5 billion in reserves. The attacks on jobs follow similar threats made earlier this year. The ballot ends on 4 October.

Jobcentre action suspended for talks

A STRIKE at a west London jobcentre set to take place on Tuesday of this week was called off.

Members of the PCS union had been preparing to strike against the closure of the jobcentre in Southall.

It's just one of hundreds of offices run by the Department for Work and Pensions earmarked for closure.

The union called the strike off for talks after bosses said they would consider "the requirement for a possible small outreach location in the area".

Kirklees council watch new boss

UNISON UNION members working for Kirklees Council Social Work Teams met last week to discuss the next steps in their longrunning dispute.

They are fighting over pay, workloads, agency staff, new technology and management bullying.

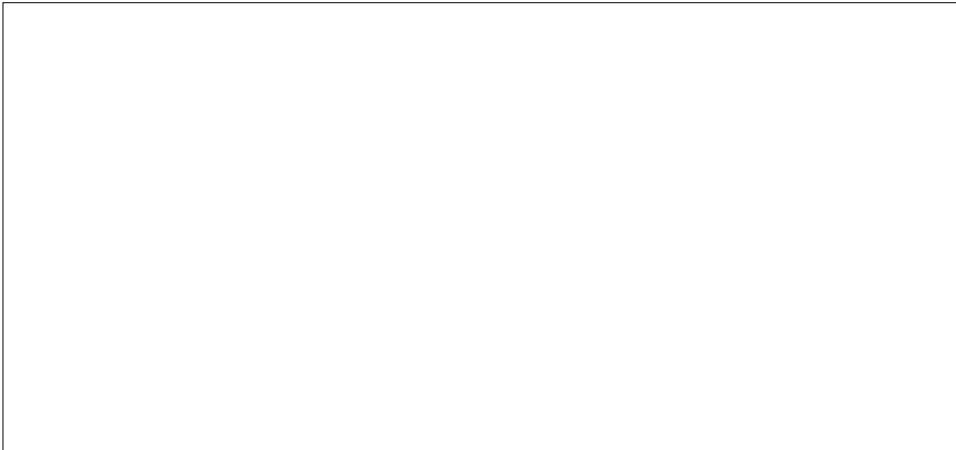
Strikes on 5 and 6 July were well supported. Members want to see what will result from the new director, who has been appointed from Leeds council, in terms of resolving the dispute.

The new director has promised proposals by the end of the month.

Unison members voted to take five days of action if the proposals are not acceptable or don't materialise at all.

Unison members will meet at the end of the month to vote on what happens next. **Nick Ruff, Kirklees Unison branch chair (pc)**

ANTI-FASCISM



HUNDREDS OF people opposed the English Defence League in Newcastle

Newcastle won't let Nazis use child abuse

by **SADIE ROBINSON**

ANTI-FASCISTS VASTLY outnumbered the Nazi English Defence League (EDL) in Newcastle last Saturday.

Over 500 anti-Nazi protesters turned out to oppose around 70 EDL supporters.

The EDL was trying to use a sexual abuse scandal in the city

to whip up racism. Some EDL members sieged during Saturday's protest.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn sent a message of support to the anti-fascist protesters.

"All cases of sexual abuse are horrific," he said.

"We must not allow the far right to exploit these vile crimes for their own vile ends,

which seek to spread hate.

"As Labour leader, I stand in solidarity with your campaign."

The anti-fascist protest, called by Newcastle Unites and Unite Against Fascism, was backed by all the major trade unions.

Other groups, including Show Racism The Red Card, were there along with school students and others.

PERTH

1,000 anti-fascists defy Scottish Defence League

AROUND 1,000 anti-fascists greatly outnumbered and humiliated the Scottish Defence League (SDL) fascists in Perth on Sunday.

The SDL was seeking to whip up racism against a plan to build a new mosque.

The broadly-based anti-fascist demonstration was joined by local SNP MP Pete Wishart and Scottish Labour interim leader Alex Rowley.

The SDL arrived in a single decker bus but couldn't park because of the

size of the counter-protest.

Eventually the police enabled a few dozen SDL members to gather.

The size of the Unite Against Fascism demonstration, prepared by a local public meeting, is a big boost to anti-racists across Scotland.

People left feeling a sense of their collective strength and celebrating another in a string of successful mobilisations against the SDL.

BRISTOL

ANTI-fascists outnumbered a Nazi protest in Bristol last Sunday.

The Nazi demonstrators called themselves British and Immigrants United Against Terrorism and Gays Against Sharia. Supporters of the English Defence League and the South West Infidels joined the protest, which was about 60-strong.

Anne-Marie Waters, who is standing to be leader of the hard right Ukip party, spoke to the protest.

Around 200 people joined a counter-protest organised by anti-fascists and LGBT+ people in Bristol. Trade unionists and members of Stand Up To Racism joined the counter-protest.

HILLSBOROUGH

Judge confirms any future trials can be held in Preston

THE TRIALS of six men charged in connection with the Hillsborough football disaster can be held at Preston Crown Court, a judge has ruled.

Mr Justice William Davis was speaking at a hearing on Wednesday of last week.

Some 96 Liverpool football fans died as a result of the disaster in April 1989. Relatives of those who died have welcomed the decision.

Sir Norman Bettison, Donald Denton, Alan Foster, Graham Mackrell and Peter Metcalf were in court for the hearing.

Bettison was a South Yorkshire Police (SYP) officer at the time of the disaster.

Denton is a former SYP chief superintendent and Foster is a former detective chief inspector.

Mackrell was Sheffield Wednesday Football Club's secretary in 1989. Metcalf was SYP's solicitor.

Misconduct

Bettison is charged with four offences of misconduct in public office.

Metcalf, Denton and Foster are charged with perverting the course of justice.

Mackrell is charged with two offences of failing to carry out his duties as required.

David Duckenfield, who was match commander on

the day of the disaster, is charged with manslaughter by gross negligence of 95 people.

He wasn't in court as a judge must agree a request to overturn a stay of prosecution he was granted in 2000 before he can be tried.

All deny the charges.

Davis told the hearing that whether the trials go ahead is "overwhelmingly likely to be a live issue".

Abuse

"All have indicated there is likely to be an application to stay proceedings as being an abuse of process," he said.

Lawyers discussed the timeframe for trials at last week's hearing.

An initial hearing on the case to lift the stay preventing the prosecution of Duckenfield is due to take place on 11 and 12 January next year.

If this application is successful and the trial goes ahead, it will begin in September next year.

Mackrell will be tried alongside Duckenfield.

The trials of Denton, Foster and Metcalf, if they go ahead, would likely begin in January 2019.

The trial of Bettison would then begin in April or May 2019.

UNITE UNION ROUND-UP

Fawley refinery canteen strikers set to escalate

CANTEEN WORKERS at Fawley oil refinery in Hampshire are stepping up their action with a five-day strike set to start from Monday 25 September.

The action will hit a training day at the ExxonMobil refinery.

The 20 strikers—most of them women—are members of the Unite union employed by contractor Baxterstorey.

They have already taken four strike days in their fight for an £8.45 an hour wage. Some are currently paid just the £7.50 minimum wage.

BANK OF ENGLAND

Withdrawal of labour paid bank workers dividends

THE UNITE union has settled its dispute with the Bank of England after workers voted by 60 percent to accept a new offer. It included more annual leave, a payment to lower paid workers and a commitment to more

negotiations with Unite over pay in future.

Unite called it "a victory for the workforce"—though with only three of four planned strike days going ahead more could have been won.

BAGGAGE HANDLERS

BAGGAGE HANDLERS for Norwegian airline at London Gatwick airport are voting in a consultative ballot over action for a pay rise.

Their employer, contractor Omniserve, has offered no

basic pay rise and suggested a company barbecue as an alternative. But Jamie Major of the workers' union Unite said, "Workers are not going to accept an offer of burgers for bucks."

HOUSING CAMPAIGNS

Housing campaigners support Grenfell march

SOME 50 housing activists and tenants met in central London last Saturday to discuss the fight for safe affordable homes in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire.

They agreed to widen the scope of the Axe the Housing Act campaign.

Eileen Short from Defend Council Housing told Socialist Worker, "We agreed to support both the

Silent March for Grenfell Tower and the protest outside the opening of the inquiry into the fire."

They also discussed fighting the merger of the Genesis and Notting Hill housing associations.

A housing summit set to take place in the autumn has been postponed. A new date is yet to be announced.

● See page 2 for more on the Grenfell Tower fire inquiry

HARINGEY

No social cleansing

HOUSING ACTIVISTS in Haringey, north London, are gearing up for a protest against the redevelopment of seven estates in the borough.

Around 800 people joined a previous protest

The council is also facing a legal challenge to the redevelopment. The protest assemblies at 12 noon on Saturday 23 September at Tottenham Green, N15 4JA.

BIRMINGHAM BIN WORKERS

Pressure from bin strike forces council boss out

by DAVE SEWELL

THE POLITICAL crisis caused by the Birmingham bin strike came to a head on Monday night as council leader John Clancy resigned ahead of a no confidence vote.

The Labour Party that runs Birmingham council is being squeezed from both sides.

The Tory government and the unelected council executive are determined to push on with austerity. The bin workers have resisted with a summer of strikes.

Clancy went over the head of chief executive Stella Manzie to offer workers a deal. But the executive refused to recognise the deal.

Then some members of the cabinet denied backing Clancy to make a deal in the first place. Next he all but accused workers' union Unite and conciliation service Acas of making it up.

The council started issuing redundancy notices on 31 August. Workers returned to the picket lines. They are striking for one hour three times a day until 21 September.

Confidence

All eight Birmingham Labour MPs signed an open letter against Clancy last week. Backbench councillors submitted a no confidence motion to Monday's Labour Group meeting.

Clancy's critics on Labour's right echo the argument from Manzie and her allies that the deal opens up the council to equal pay claims.

This is bogus. The deal only keeps in



PICKETS AT the Redfern Road bin depot

PICTURE: SHARON CAMPION

We refuse to be intimidated

by PAUL JACKSON, striking Birmingham bin worker

THE COUNCIL could easily afford to settle this. This dispute is about trying to break the union to implement cuts.

If they beat us now they'll come back for the whole council workforce.

But they're not going to beat us. We went straight back on strike on 1 September,

and the solidarity on the picket line has been magnificent.

I'm a working class person and I am proud of standing up with my colleagues.

This is a Labour council, and I am absolutely disgusted with these Labour councillors. Not one of them has supported our dispute or come

on our picket lines.

But we've got the public on our side and the tide is turning in our favour. We will win.

We will not be bullied. We will not be intimidated. And we will not be lied to by the bureaucrats and oligarchs at the council.

● longer online at bit.ly/2jggqHi

place a pay structure that has existed since 2011. It has never been subject to an equal pay claim.

Unite assistant general secretary Howard Beckett said Manzie "must follow in John Clancy's footsteps and resign".

Furious

People in Birmingham are furious with the council. In a letter to Clancy councillor Barry Bowles wrote, "I think we can go no lower than where we are now".

"We are hated by the trade unions and the Left and we are also hated by the right" because of the bin dispute, he added.

But Clancy's successor will face the same dilemma. The council must decide which side it is on—workers, services and unions or Tory austerity.

The outcome could set a precedent for councils across Britain. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn needs to intervene on the side of workers.

Strikers must hold their nerve and fight until victory—and every trade unionist must stand behind them.

Unite has called a rally on Sunday with general secretary Len McCluskey demanding the council respects the deal. It's a chance to show support for this crucial dispute.

● Rally—Sunday 17 September, 11am, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1DB

● Send messages of support to lynne.shakespeare@uniteunion.org

● Send cheques payable to "Unite the union" to Unite the union, Transport House, 9-17 Victoria Street, West Bromwich, B70 8HX

POSTAL WORKERS



>>>continued from page 20

a lot of the planes and trucks that move the post around during the night".

A later delivery time would mean people's post arriving later—and force workers to reorganise their lives.

Merlin Reader works at the Mount Pleasant mail centre in central London. "People who've sorted their life around their deliveries are screwed," he said.

The attacks pave the way to a part-time, casual workforce. Forcing this through would see Royal Mail try to scrap deals protecting terms and conditions.

Mark explained, "If we didn't have a legally binding agreement they would leave the existing workforce with the declining traffic—the letters."

"And they would bring in a new workforce on inferior conditions for the traffic that's growing—parcels from internet shopping."

The CWU is demanding an extension of the agreements, a shorter working week to ensure full time jobs, and a delivery model with early deliveries and late collections.

Bosses' attacks are partly a consequence of privatisation. They have piled extra work on workers instead of recruiting since Royal Mail was sold off.

Jack said, "They want you to absorb one or two deliveries. You can't do it because there's not enough time in the day."

The anger is building, as a number of recent unofficial walkouts have shown. And bosses are getting scared.

They announced a new pay offer—never mentioned to the union—on Friday of last week. Instead of the paltry £250 lump sum they wanted to give workers, they offered £350 and a below-inflation pay rise.

On the same day distribution workers at the South Midlands mail centre walked out.

Bosses tried to break an annual leave agreement but backed down when processing workers walked out in solidarity.

The CWU branch said the walkout was "a sign of things to come at the biggest Mail Centre as we approach a national dispute".

● Some names have been changed

NUCLEAR WORKERS

Winter strike for nuclear?

SOME 3,000 workers are set to strike at Sellafield on Wednesday 27 September in a pay dispute. The GMB union, which has 3,000 members at Sellafield, called the strike.

GMB members at Sellafield voted by 76 percent to strike. Unite union members were due to start getting ballot papers on Wednesday.

Bosses have imposed a 1.5 percent pay rise—far below inflation, which stands at 3.9 percent according to the RPI measure. Unite said the difference could make workers over £1,700 worse off.

The GMB suggested that the promise of "meaningful talks" could be enough to avert strikes. Last year workers agreed to accept a raise of just 0.25 percent to stop bosses cutting apprentices' pay.

It's time for action.

BUSES

Bus bosses to feel heat

LONDON BUS and Docklands Light Railway workers were set to demonstrate at City Hall on Thursday morning over "seriously deteriorating working conditions".

It follows the publication of a report released by the London Assembly in July.

It found that tiredness, lack of toilet access, poorly maintained buses and hassle from controllers over the radio are distracting bus drivers and threatening safety.

Part of the background is low pay. London mayor Sadiq Khan pledged to make Transport for London's bus contractors pay one rate for the job—but still hasn't delivered.

AIRLINE WORKERS

BA fights dirty on pensions

BRITISH AIRWAYS (BA) has declared war on workers with an announcement that it would close its main defined benefit pension scheme.

The closure of the New Airways Pensions Scheme (NAPS) would affect 17,000 current and former workers.

Bosses hope to change the defined benefit scheme to a defined contribution scheme. The first guarantees their retirement income, the second makes it dependent on stock market fluctuations.

The money is there. BA is making record profits. Unions need to fight the closure.

One worker in Unite's Bassa section told Socialist Worker, "There's enough money in the bank to pay off the deficit in the scheme."

Unite members in BA's mixed fleet section have already been fighting over pay. MPs are supporting an early day motion condemning

BA's use of Qatar Airlines for scabbing. Talks were planned at conciliation service Acas this week.

While their sustained strike hit hard, they were fighting alone. The attack on pensions is a chance to bring the bigger battalions into the fight.

The worker said, "There should be a company-wide strike".

Captains fight Cook

PILOTS AT airline Thomas Cook struck for 12 hours on Friday of last week for a better pay deal.

Their Balpa union said it was the first pilots' strike in Britain since the 1970s.

Workers want a raise "substantially" above inflation. They can win.

Further strikes have been set for Saturday of next week and the two following Fridays.

RAIL WORKERS

EAST MIDLANDS Trains could see strikes if the firm doesn't revise its 2.7 percent pay offer to workers.

The workers' RMT union described the offer as "totally inadequate".

It has begun to prepare for a strike ballot.

CINEMA WORKERS

Stand with Ritzy workers

SOME 60 protesters and local trade unionists formed a line across the front of the Ritzy cinema in Brixton, south London, on Monday night.

The cinema boycott is part of a three-year battle over the company's refusal to pay the living wage of £9.75 an hour in London and £8.45 outside it.

Protesters were joined by Labour shadow cabinet member Chris Williamson MP. **Tim O'Dell**

THE FIGHT IS ON FOR ROYAL MAIL

by NICK CLARK

THOUSANDS OF Royal Mail workers rallied outside their workplaces on Monday of this week at mass gate meetings across Britain.

They're gearing up for a huge battle to defend their pensions, their pay and the future of their working lives.

CWU union officials told Socialist Worker that a possible 1,400 gate meetings took place on Monday.

The union is going all out to deliver a massive yes vote in a strike ballot set to end on 3 October.

Walkout

A big vote could lead to the first nationwide walkout of postal workers since 2009—also the first since Royal Mail was privatised in 2013.

The CWU's "national gate meeting day" on Monday follows weeks of similar meetings.

Mark Dolan, CWU area delivery rep for North and North West London, told Socialist Worker the response from union members has been unprecedented.



AN UPBEAT mood on a post workers' gate meeting in north London on Monday

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

"When we didn't have social media it was difficult to gauge what was going on up and down the country," he said.

"But I have never seen the amount of workplace

meetings as there have been now."

Bosses want to scrap the various pension schemes workers are currently on and replace them with a "defined contribution" scheme.

This would see less money paid into the pension throughout workers' careers. And the amount paid out would depend on how well bosses invest the fund in the stock market casino.

Workers are currently on "defined benefit" schemes—which give a fixed wage in retirement based on their final salary.

They could lose thousands of pounds.

Colin, who works at Royal Mail's delivery office in Forest Hill, south east London, told Socialist Worker the changes would "make a big difference to our standard of living".

"I'm three years away from my pension," he said.

Lose

"I'm expecting a lump sum and monthly pay. But I could lose about £9,000 out of my lump sum and my monthly pension will go down."

Workers who joined Royal Mail after 2008 are already on a defined contribution scheme. The CWU is demanding a new "wage in retirement" scheme for all workers.

Bosses want to force through other changes to Royal Mail's operation.

They plan to move delivery times to much later in the afternoon.

Bosses say this is because they want more parcels ordered online late at night to be delivered the next day.

But it will open the door to the possibility of cutbacks.

Mark said bosses want the changes "so that they can cut >>>turn to page 19

ANTI-AUSTERITY

Thousands join Bristol protest against cuts—and say, 'Get the Tories out'

by SARAH BATES in Bristol

THOUSANDS OF protesters were out in Bristol last Saturday demanding an end to Tory austerity.

The "fund our city" anti-cuts demo was called by Labour mayor Marvin Rees and the People's Assembly.

It was the biggest demo in the city since 2011.

Many protesters were on their first demonstration.

Software engineer Martha Rigby told Socialist Worker, "I've never been to anything like this before but I saw it on Facebook and I feel like



On the march in Bristol

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

I have to do something.

"The cuts are not aimed at the right people. They're cutting what we need instead of taxing big corporations."

There was a big official Labour Party presence on the demonstration, with banners from all four of Bristol's constituency Labour Parties and local Momentum groups.

There was a housing bloc, an NHS bloc, a Green bloc and an education bloc, as well as banners from major trade unions.

Some protesters hoped that similar demonstrations would happen around Britain.

Lee Starr-Elliott is a Labour Party member and equality and disability officer for his CWU union branch. He said, "Every other council should use Bristol as an inspiration and call a similar demo."

He linked the cuts to privatisation. "Royal Mail was sold off by the Tories. Whatever happens to Royal Mail will happen to every other public sector job."

Mayor Marvin Rees said Bristol's inequality was a "city shame."

Carmen Anderson spoke about how cuts have affected her children's school.

"Teachers are leaving because of stress, parents are asked to donate money for basic resources," she said. "I'm here today to get the Tories out—it's what we need to get us out of this mess."

People are pleased that Rees called the march. But there was also anger at Rees for leading a council that has passed cuts on.

If Rees refused to implement the cuts, it would help to build a crisis for Theresa May, and he would receive massive support.

As Rees said, "Austerity is a choice and it is costing lives".